
Nepala Bhasa Roman Transliteration (NBRT)

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(Second Year Bachelors in Arts with Linguistics &
Sociology Major)

Paperback

ISBN: 978-9937-1-1040-2

Published on:

Nepala Sambata (Solar) : 1142 Thinla 25

Nepala Sambata (Lunar) : 1142 Thinla-thwa Jhimila (Tenth moon)

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Price: Rs. 30/- (Thirty)

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#RukuYuSafoo

Preface

Late in 1141, I was working on a book to be named *Nepal, Nepali and Nepala Bhasa*. The book was exploring on the politics and linguistics of the term Nepal. In the process, I had to juggle between using three scripts: Nepala Lipi, Devanagari and Roman, and three languages Sanskrit, Nepala Bhasa and Khas. Since the book was being written in English, using Roman alphabets to represent sounds of these three languages was challenging.

There are various practices of romanization for the Devanagari script. One of the mainly used romanization is International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST). Both Devanagari and Nepala Lipi are used to write Sanskrit and Nepala Bhasa. Sanskrit is written in Nepala Lipi among the Nepa-mi (Newa) population, while in Devanagari script among the Khas population. While the native script of Nepala Bhasa is Nepala Lipi and eleven others, the use of Devanagari script emerged as a byproduct of Shah, Rana and Panchayat regimes ban on Nepala Bhasa, and attempt of revival of the language through use of predominant script.

However, IAST is based on Sanskrit and therefore cannot represent Nepala Bhasa phonology or can mislead in readers to comprehend the writing with Sanskrit fixation. Therefore, I came up with certain modifications in IAST to introduce *Nepala Bhasa Roman Transliteration (NBRT)*.

While the book *Nepal, Nepali and Nepala Bhasa* is work on progress, and would take a while to be published, I thought to compile the NBRT section to form this book.

This book presents a set of phonetic romanization for Nepala Bhasa, which may be different from common practices of romanization.

Nepala Bhasa Roman Transliteration (NBRT)

I propose Nepala Bhasa Roman Transliteration (NBRT) in two forms, one that uses special characteristics and the other that doesn't. This is because I try to align with commonly used form of transliteration (IAST), as well as take into account that diacritic markers may not be easily available in all devices.

Vowels

Nepala Lipi	Devanagari	NBRT (with diacritics)	NBRT (without diacritics)
अ	अ	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
आ	आ	<i>ā</i>	<i>aa</i>
इ	इ	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>
उ	उ	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>
ए	ए	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>
अः	अः	<i>a:</i>	<i>a:</i>
आः	आः	<i>ā:</i>	<i>aa:</i>
ई	ई	<i>ī</i>	<i>i:</i>
ऊ	ऊ	<i>ū</i>	<i>u:</i>
अय्	अय्	<i>e:</i>	<i>e:</i>
एय्	एय्	<i>ee:</i>	<i>ee:</i>
अँ	अँ	<i>am̐</i>	<i>a~</i>
आँ	आँ	<i>ām̐</i>	<i>aa~</i>
इँ	इँ	<i>im̐</i>	<i>i~</i>
उँ	उँ	<i>um̐</i>	<i>u~</i>

ॐ	ँ	<i>em̐</i>	<i>e~</i>
अं	अं	<i>am̐:</i>	<i>a~:</i>
आं	आं	<i>ām̐:</i>	<i>aa~:</i>
इं	इं	<i>im̐:</i>	<i>i~:</i>
उं	उं	<i>um̐:</i>	<i>u~:</i>
अँय्	अँय्	<i>em̐:</i>	<i>e~:</i>
अँय्	अँय्	<i>eeem̐:</i>	<i>ee~:</i>

Diphthongs

Nepala Lipi	Devanagari	NBRT (with diacritics)	NBRT (without diacritics)
ॐ	ऐ	<i>ai</i>	<i>ai</i>
ॐ	औ	<i>au</i>	<i>au</i>
आँ	आइ	<i>āi</i>	<i>aaai</i>
आउ	आउ	<i>āu</i>	<i>aaau</i>
इँ	इउ	<i>iu</i>	<i>iu</i>
उँ	उइ	<i>ui</i>	<i>ui</i>
आय्	आय्	<i>āe</i>	<i>aaae</i>

Consonants

Nepala Lipi	Devanagari	NBRT (with diacritics)	NBRT (without diacritics)
क	क	<i>ka</i>	<i>ka</i>
ख	ख	<i>kha</i>	<i>kha</i>
ग	ग	<i>ga</i>	<i>ga</i>

घ	घ	<i>gha</i>	<i>gha</i>
ढ	ड	<i>ṇa</i>	<i>nga</i>
ॢ	ड्ह	<i>ṇha</i>	<i>ngha</i>
च	च	<i>ca</i>	<i>ca</i>
छ	छ	<i>cha</i>	<i>cha</i>
ज	ज	<i>ja</i>	<i>ja</i>
झ	झ	<i>jha</i>	<i>jha</i>
ञ	ञ	<i>ṇa</i>	<i>n~a</i>
ॣ	ञ्ह	<i>ṇha</i>	<i>n~ha</i>
त	त	<i>ta</i>	<i>ta</i>
थ	थ	<i>tha</i>	<i>tha</i>
द	द	<i>da</i>	<i>da</i>
ध	ध	<i>dha</i>	<i>dha</i>
न	न	<i>na</i>	<i>na</i>
॥	न्ह	<i>nha</i>	<i>nha</i>
प	प	<i>pa</i>	<i>pa</i>
फ	फ	<i>pha</i>	<i>pha</i>
ब	ब	<i>ba</i>	<i>ba</i>
भ	भ	<i>bha</i>	<i>bha</i>
म	म	<i>ma</i>	<i>ma</i>
ॡ	म्ह	<i>mha</i>	<i>mha</i>
य	य	<i>ya</i>	<i>ya</i>
ॠ	ह्य	<i>hya</i>	<i>hya</i>
र	र	<i>ra</i>	<i>ra</i>
ॡ	ह	<i>hra</i>	<i>hra</i>

ल	ल	<i>la</i>	<i>la</i>
ल्ल	ल्ह	<i>lha</i>	<i>lha</i>
व	व	<i>wa</i>	<i>wa</i>
व्व	व्ह	<i>hwa</i>	<i>hwa</i>
स	स	<i>sa</i>	<i>sa</i>
ह	ह	<i>ha</i>	<i>ha</i>

IAST was primarily devised for Sanskrit language, while the alphabet ascribed may be same, the phonology of Nepala Bhasa is different from that of Sanskrit. Here is where things are different from IAST.

Liphuti or Bisarga

IAST uses *ḥ* to denote *lipḥuti* (ः) or *bisarga* (ः) marker. NBRT uses ‘.’.

In Sanskrit *bisarga* represents *h* sound, while in Nepala Bhasa *lipḥuti* denotes a long sound.

In Sanskrit, अः means अह्, while in Nepala Bhasa अः is the long sound of अ, and आः is the long sound of आ.

Sinhaphuti or Sirbindu

IAST uses *ṁ* to denote *sinḥaphuti* (ँ) or *sirbindu* (ं) marker. NBRT uses ‘ँ’.

In Sanskrit, *sirbindu* represents a homorganic nasal sound, called *pañcama varṇa* (यञ्चम वर्ण, पञ्चम वर्ण). In Nepala Bhasa, *sinḥaphuti* denotes a long nasal sound. NBRT adds ‘.’ to the *milāphuti* (ँ) or *chandrabindu* (ँ) symbol, as *milāphuti* represents short nasal sound.

For example: In Sanskrit, *aṃga* (अंग) means *aṅga* (अङ्ग), *pañca* (पंच) means *pañca* (पञ्च), *aṃḍā* (अंडा) means *aṇḍā* (अण्डा), *aṃta* (अंत) means *anta* (अन्त), *daṃbha* (दंभ) means *dambha* (दम्भ).

In Nepala Bhasa, अँअँ is the long sound of अँअँ. For example: कँकँ is pronounced as the long sound of कँकँ.

Va to Wa

NBRT does not use *va* to represent व व as in IAST since it is commonly read as र भ.

Some aspirated consonants

The alphabets क क क क क क क are written in Nepala Lipi, with the *ha* alphabet on the top, which means *ha* is represented first, since an alphabet in Nepala Lipi is written top to bottom.

In Nepala Lipi, wherever the *ha* sound is combined with other sounds, the *ha* is always written on the top (first). For instance, what could be distinguished in writing as म्ह and ह्म in Devanagari, is क्क in Nepala Lipi. It is never written as क्क in Nepala Lipi.

In Devanagari as well, it can be written as follows ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ with the *ha* first, however in practice, they are written as ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह. Which means, ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह are written with *ha* latter, while ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ are written with *ha* first. This practice is the basis of NBRT romanization.

While ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह (*where ha appears latter*), is also written as ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ (*where ha appears first*), but ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ ह्ङ (*where ha appears first*) is never written as ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह ङ्ह (*where ha appears latter*).

The ña and hña sound

The inclusion of ña (ञ, ञ) and hña (ह्ण, ञ्ह) to Nepala Bhasa orthography is relatively new. It was proposed by language expert Bishnu Chitrakar. Due to the predominance of Khas language in Nepal, the alphabet ña (ञ, ञ) is read as *yam* (यँ, यँ) when on its own or appears at the end of the word, and as *na* (न, न) when it appears in the middle of a word. For instance, in Khas language, *duniñā* (दुनिञ्ज, दुनिञ्ज) is pronounced as *duniyām* (दुनियाँ, दुनियाँ), while *kañcana* (कञ्जन, कञ्चन) is pronounced as *kancana* (कञ्चन, कञ्चन). However, the alphabet ña represents a palatal nasal sound in Nepala Bhasa. The sound has been a part of recent discussion in Nepala Bhasa orthography and the mainstream is yet to adopt use of ña and hña. Not just in written practice are these alphabets written as *na* and *nha* respectively, but also in spoken language it is noted that this distinction between *na* and ña is dying out.

An example of ña in Nepala Bhasa are *ñyatā*: (ञ्यातः, ज्यताः) which is now commonly written as *nyatā*: (न्यातः, न्यताः), meaning cheeks.

An example of hña in Nepala Bhasa are *hnyāke* (ह्ण्याक, ञ्ह्याके) which is now commonly written as *nhyāke* (न्याक, न्ह्याके), meaning to begin.

The e in e: and āe

IAST uses *ye* to denote य ये and *y* to denote य् य्. Unlike Sanskrit, they represent the sound *e* (ए, ए), and appear after the syllabary ending of *a* (अ, अ) and *ā* (आ, आ), in verbs and nouns respectively, and do not hold a phonological value. For instance: - The verb धाय धाये is *dhāe*, and the noun राय् भाय् is *bhāe*. The verb कय कये is *ke*., and the noun मय् मय् is *me*..

* - Rendered incorrectly due to lack of glyphs in the font.